

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 252 732

CE 040 569

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TITLE Curriculum Development in the Education of Adults. A Manual for Practitioners. An FEU Staff Development Publication.
INSTITUTION Further Education Unit, London (England).
REPORT NO ISBN-0-946469-52-0
PUB DATE Nov 84
NOTE 65p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Education; Case Studies; *Curriculum Development; Educational Administration; Educational Improvement; *Educational Policy; *Educational Practices; *Guidelines; *Models; Policy Formation; Postsecondary Education; Program Development; Systems Approach; Systems Development; Teaching Methods

IDENTIFIERS *Great Britain

ABSTRACT

This manual, based on two years of research in Great Britain, is intended to assist those who are involved in the education of adults. In particular, it is intended to persuade adult educators to examine the relationships between policies and practice and thereby enhance the effectiveness of educational provision. The first section of the manual provides a framework within which questions concerning principles and policies are posed. This leads to three sections relating to curriculum design, implementation, and evaluation. In each section, three groups of questions are identified: (1) those concerned with policy development in a given geographic area, (2) those concerned with planning within an institution, and (3) those concerned with individual courses. Each section provides a checklist that should bring to light situations in which curriculum decisions have been adequate or inadequate. At various points throughout the guide, explanations are offered, examples given, or specific case studies used to illuminate issues found at area, institution, or course level. A brief concluding section offers a systems model for adult education development from the general text, the checklists, and case-study material. (KC)

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CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

*A manual for
practitioners*

FURTHER EDUCATION UNIT



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CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

A manual for practitioners

Edited by

Alan Chadwick and Derek Legge

FURTHER EDUCATION UNIT



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ISBN 0 946469 52 0
November 1984

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Printed by Silverdale Press Ltd., Hayes, Middlesex.



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Dear Sir/Madam

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

I enclose herewith a copy of the above publication which is intended to assist all those who have a serious interest in the education and training of adults - whether as managers, teachers, trainers, learners or laymen - to arrive at a systematic view of the adult education curriculum.

In particular, it is hoped that this document will persuade educators of adults to examine the relationships between policies and practice with clearer understanding and thereby enhance the effectiveness of provision.

This manual is based on the findings of a research project conducted over 2 years by a team from the University of Surrey led by Dr Alan Chadwick. In the course of research the team found that the same principles of curriculum design and development held good across the whole field of education and training for adults. In relation to a four-part model of the curriculum the manual identifies key questions to be considered at area, institutional, and course level. Case studies drawn from the research illustrate the complex way in which such questions arise in practice.

The sets of questions (given as a checklist at the end of each section) and the discussion of relationships between them offer practitioners a ready-made basis both for their own planning and for collective staff development activities. It is hoped that the FEU will shortly be able to offer a programme of support for the latter at regional level.

Two features of good practice in curriculum development are highlighted in this publication. The first is the need for effective communications at and between the various levels of responsibility for provision. The second is the key role of staff development in the process of change. At a time when the provision of education and training for adults is under pressure and the means of resourcing it are becoming increasingly complex, this manual should be of particular value in helping practitioners to cope with change.

Yours faithfully

Jack Mansell

JACK MANSELL
Chief Officer

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PREFACE

The first specific object for which the Further Education Unit was established has from the outset been-

'to review and evaluate the range of existing further education curricula and programmes and to identify overlap, duplication, deficiencies and inconsistencies therein.'

In its initial years, the Unit concentrated on curricular offerings for the 16 - 19 age group, especially in the deficiency area of vocational preparation as distinct from vocational education. As the FEU grew and matured, it became possible to extend its range of active concern to the whole field of further education. In the statutory sense this has (since 1944) meant post-school education as a whole, including both higher education (whether offered in the universities or elsewhere) and education for adults (whether through educational institutions or through other community agencies).

The Unit has three main ways of influencing and being influenced by the field in which it holds this central review and development function: the commissioning of one or more projects; the issue of a policy statement; and the formation of an advisory committee. Some curriculum areas merit one or two of these: the education and training of adults has called for all three. The policy statement* was issued in March 1984; the advisory committee began work shortly before.

This manual, however, is the published result of earlier work. It was in 1982 that the FEU commissioned the Department of Adult Education of the University of Surrey to consider 'Curriculum Design in the Education of Adults.' The conventional response to such a brief would have been an overview of the field, with an analysis of consumer needs and requirements, followed by recommendations for appropriate responses from the many providing agencies - colleges, adult education institutes, training bodies, community agencies, higher education institutions, 'responsible bodies' like the WEA. As the research progressed,

* FEU Statement on the Provision of Education and Training for Adults.
March 1984 (ISBN 0 946469 41 5).

however, it became clear, notwithstanding national initiatives by the DES in programmes for PICKUP (professional, industrial and commercial updating) and the adult unemployed, and by the MSC in their Adult Training Strategy, that at this stage a national curriculum map was neither attainable nor appropriate. What might be helpful was a framework of questions for consideration and use at local level, especially by policymakers and others working within the education service in its broadest interpretation.

The manual presupposes that curricular offers should change and develop, and that practitioners will want to ensure both that this happens and that it happens by design, as a conscious response to changing recognition of needs and circumstances. It is not intended only for people working in 'adult education' as conventionally defined (though often working pretty unconventionally!); it is intended to encompass vocational and academic as well as leisure education for adults, however provided. The FEU policy statement expresses the view that adults constitute an expanding clientele of remarkable diversity, which needs more accurate identification, and that in order to meet those diverse needs it is necessary to promote organisational and curricular continuity rather than either laissez-faire or imposed uniformity. It is thus necessary to invite practitioners to undertake for themselves in respect of their own patch the review and evaluation of curricula and programmes which at national level is the FEU's function; and the manual is intended to assist and give some common shape to this process.

We hope that it will be helpful, and on behalf of the Unit and its steering committee I conclude with an expression of gratitude to Dr Alan Chadwick and his long-suffering research team for their work.

John C N Baillie
FEU Board of Management

INTRODUCTION

Scope

The purpose of the research upon which this manual is based was to identify 'good' curriculum practice in the adult sector of education, and ways in which this could be better achieved.

A variety of interpretations of 'curriculum' exist. Here curriculum is taken to mean the total way in which educational policy decisions are put into practice. The main elements in this process are aims and objectives, content, teaching and learning methods and evaluation.

The term 'Education of Adults' (EA) is defined as embracing all kinds of education undertaken by adults, including vocational studies. It also recognises the right of educational access to a variety of activities for all adults as a continuing process which concentrates on real rather than assumed needs.

There are few studies concerning the relationship between EA and curriculum although it is an important but complex theme for consideration, discussion and action. Close integration of curriculum theory and practice is explored in this manual and issues are developed more fully in an associated research document*. In general it is contended that certain fundamental features of EA such as negotiation, active participation and experiential learning should feature strongly in curriculum developments which involve adults.

Readership

The manual is directed to all concerned with the education of adults, and particularly to those with a full-time commitment. Curriculum development may be undertaken by individuals and groups at various levels. Some may be theorists, policy makers and administrators who influence the provision, take decisions and manage. Others may be teachers or students acting in a full-time or part-time capacity. Whatever the role, all need to understand the constraints and negotiating skills which contribute to the process of curriculum development. The manual may be used either for individual study or for staff development and training activities.

* Curriculum development in the education of adults - research document (FEU, 1984) available on request from FEU.

Rationale

The manual seeks to help define the problems surrounding the term 'good practice', and also to be available as a 'tool' offering some guidance about curriculum development, its implementation and evaluation. In the course of the research it became clear that various approaches to 'good practice' in EA were possible, but that, on the whole, a 'systems' approach was the most helpful way of considering and tackling problems.

The manual thus offers a framework which can assist the user to make satisfactory and systematic decisions about ways of achieving good curriculum practice. It is not intended that it should be used uncritically, or be seen as offering definitive, prescriptive statements applicable at all conceivable times and places. It should, therefore, be viewed primarily as an encouragement to discussion and review of existing practice by all those concerned with the education of adults.

Guide to the Manual

The first section provides a framework within which questions concerning principles and policies are posed. This leads forward to three sections relating to Design, Implementation and Evaluation.

In each Section, three groups are identified. They are:-

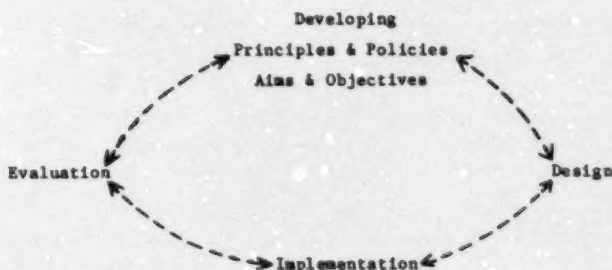
- (i) those concerned with policy developments in a given area such as an LEA, a University extra-mural department, a WEA district or a regional grouping of a voluntary organisation. Most of the individuals in this group are administrators or elected members.
- (ii) those concerned with planning within an institution such as an FE College or AE Centre. Individuals involved primarily in this group would include heads of department, college principals, heads of centre.
- (iii) those concerned with individual courses, programmes, classes or other educational events. Individuals involved primarily

in this group would be teachers, instructors, lecturers, students. It should be added that some people may be involved at more than one level and in more than one role.

Each section provides a form of check-list and these should bring to light situations in which curriculum decisions have been adequate or inadequate (if the latter, possibly because of a failure to take all relevant factors into account).

At various points throughout the guide explanations are offered, examples given, or specific case studies used to illuminate issues found at area, institution or course level.

A brief concluding section offers a curriculum model for EA development from the general text, the check-lists and case-study material. Basically, four main elements are contained in the model.* Expressed simply these are:



As the diagram indicates, in attempting to achieve 'good practice' it is necessary first to consider principles and policies and their related aims and objectives. This then should lead to an examination of curriculum development in terms of the design of courses, programmes and other educational activities to include content and methods. A consideration of how to implement the design, with its attendant problems, follows. Evaluation is essential and should affect the three other elements. Indeed, there will be inter-action among all elements.

* See also the FEU Curriculum Development model (FEU Newsletter January, 1983), to which this is closely related.

SECTION 1

DEVELOPING PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Introduction

One of the first tasks of the curriculum developer is to consider principles and the ways in which policies may be formulated. This will include a study of aims and objectives within a framework of two broad questions:

What is desirable?

What is possible?

The research has indicated the need to discuss these issues under three main headings: Area Level, Institutional Level and Course Level (see introduction).

A. AREA LEVEL

Are there fixed or prevailing principles or values under which the curriculum operates?

Organisations and institutions often work within a particular framework of ideas, and this can also obtain for some courses, programmes or classes.

In considering aims and objectives certain basic questions should be posed.

1. Is there a particular ethos or tradition?
 - (1) For example, is there a belief in student control and negotiation of the curriculum? In some organisations the principle of student control has been firmly established or recommended as standard practice. This is the situation in the WEA, in the ECA and in some LEA institutions where student committees have been much encouraged.
 - (11) Are there ideas about appropriate student groups? For example, in one WEA branch, a tutor designed a course on

antiques which attracted few 'regulars' but did gain the support of a large number of antique dealers. The Management Committee considered this to be an inappropriate learner group for the WEA. The course was cancelled immediately after enrolment was complete. The example illustrates the mis-match between the tutor's perceptions and the organisation's ethos.

2. Are there established views about the acceptability or otherwise of subject matter?

For example, some LEAs appear reluctant to offer courses dealing with political and apparently controversial issues. In a different situation a teacher in a university extra-mural department proposed a course using television serializations of classic novels as source materials. Despite its educational merits and popularity, the executive staff of the department felt that the course ran counter to accepted criteria of merit which the department used. In consequence the course did not run. It is suggested that a review of these criteria would have been appropriate in this case.

3. Are there established views about the desirability of competition or collaboration with other providers?

A number of LEA providers were committed to the idea that there was a strong correlation between competition and quality of provision, that is, a greater degree of competition improves the quality of individual providers' curricula. The research has not found evidence to support this assertion. Typically, LEAs which adopted this model demonstrated less efficient use of resources, greater duplication of resources, and less ability to deal with special groups.

Similarly, some institutions maintain subjects irrespective of the range or type of provision offered by other agencies in their localities.

An alternative model involves some providers in developing and maintaining extensive collaboration with others to offer a range

of activities across a geographical area, and to avoid the wasteful duplication of staff and other resources. Success here may depend on whether relationships with external agencies have been fully developed. For example, one LEA observed during the research has introduced special 'link' courses which remove many of the artificial barriers between EA providers.

It is important to avoid the 'lowest common denominator' kind of approach where, for example, collaboration represents only a general and comparatively superficial provision.

Some collaborative activities are certainly productive. One example drawn from the research concerned an AE centre which offered a course on micro-computing in a rural area. Learners were able to provide the micro-computers themselves through their own networks, but came together in the AE centre in order to share both the equipment and learning opportunities.

4. Are there strong or fixed views about teacher or learner autonomy and control?

In some institutions the expansion of courses clearly reflect the subject interests of the teacher. Other providers emphasise the value of self-directed learning, that is learning which places responsibility for its development upon the individual and/or the group.

There may be other prevailing values and it is important that all aspects should be considered, such as the emphasis on instrumentalism shown in some institutions with a strong vocational orientation, which conditions the principles and underlies the formulation of policy.

B. INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

(NB. Some of the questions under C will also be pertinent)

Are there ideas about priorities to which attention must be given?

1. A question of central importance is whether priority should be

given to minority or special groups, for example, the elderly, ethnic minorities, the handicapped, women returners or those in need of basic education. Alternatively, should an emphasis be placed on broad 'mainstream' provision flexible enough to provide for those with special needs?

There are problems in providing for stereotyped minorities in that such provision runs the risk of isolating some people into an educational ghetto. It can be noted that the majority of executive staff interviewed during the course of the research emphasised the fact that financial pressures on centres and colleges produced a situation in which 'pump-priming' to develop provision for special groups, and subsidy to maintain it was becoming increasingly difficult.

2. Should the curriculum be responsive to particular pressures?

National and local initiatives may both exert pressures. On the national level, the DES PICKUP initiative has regional agents one of whose functions is to encourage institutions to liaise more closely with employers and make provision for the up-dating of employees.

An example of local student pressure involved a women's collective provided by three educational professionals - two redundant FE teachers and an employed student counsellor - which offered a broadly based course which included 'Women in Literature', 'Women in Science' and 'Assertiveness Training'. After several months, it became evident that the learners were identifying further needs for participation in both vocational and non-vocational education. The co-ordinators were aware that the learners had highlighted some needs that the collective itself could not satisfy, particularly as a number of learners were expressing interest in courses carrying a professional qualification. They therefore designed a course which tried to construct study-plans tailored to the requirements of each learner. This was stimulated by the fact that the women had received little guidance from their FE college and polytechnic as to which courses were appropriate to their needs and interests.

Also, the collective did not want to expand because of the management and accommodation implications, and the wish to retain the 'group' or 'collective' atmosphere.

It was found that open discussion of individual members' needs helped the whole learner group to formulate priorities in both vocational and personal development. The presence of a student counsellor who was aware of various entry concessions open to mature learners made certain that further studies were approached in the most effective way. For example, where waivers were offered to mature students, they did not need to take GCE 'A' level courses.

3. How far must or should the curriculum be influenced by special subsidies from external funding agencies? Agencies and institutions may search for extra resources with which to achieve their aims and objectives. It was clear from the research that many providers were not aware of grant monies which were available from a wide range of sources such as the D&S, ESF, MSC and independent charities.

Forms of funding may be necessary to maintain even the existence of providing agencies, and it is apparent, for example, that there were increases in vocational provision after the injection of MSC money into the Youth Training Scheme (YTS). The danger is that the aims and objectives of the agency may become dominated by such funding and be undermined, especially where the funding is volatile.

Is priority to be given to explicit student demand or to the providers' analysis of student needs?

There is some danger in confusing 'demands' and 'needs'. The research evidence suggests that it is often useful to identify needs through direct contact with representative organisations for example, or through making use of other agencies' detailed knowledge. Sometimes, direct contact with learners or potential learners can be made through methods such as 'drop in' centres or street interviews. These have been successfully used in a number of LEA's, but they demand a high level of resourcing and are

not always systematic. It may also be the case that such methods only identify needs as perceived by potential learners, which are not necessarily their real ones.

Systematic attempts to analyse real needs seems preferable to either:-

- (1) the provision of a programme based entirely on explicit demands from learners and/or potential learners.

or

- (ii) the provision of a set programme to which learners merely react either by choosing the parts they want or making some parts inoperable by withdrawing their support. Except for this negative control learners do not actually determine either the content or the range of courses. In general, the evidence suggests the need for consultation and participation in decision making.

C. COURSE LEVEL

What practical issues condition policy?

(NB. Some of these questions will be equally pertinent to level B)

1. External Agencies: are there guidelines from external agencies, and are they inflexible or capable of modification? For example, is the choice of target group affected by the regulations of bodies such as CMAA, BTEC, ESF or the MSC? In a number of cases it is evident that providers are not making use of the opportunities which validating bodies allow them in order to develop special recruitment policies.
2. Staffing: how many staff - support staff as well as teaching staff - are available? Clearly, there is little point in creating an unrealistic design. The availability of human resources must condition objectives however desirable the 'ideal' objective is. The problems of a college with large numbers of applicants for courses but with no means of increasing its staff has illustrated this constraint during the enquiry.

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Are objectives conditioned by internal demarcation problems? For example, curriculum goals may be affected by inter-departmental factors which may point to the need for internal re-appraisal/re-organisation, possibly through staff development and training provision. Academic boards have in some instances been seen to be effective in removing internal competition and disputes.

Is there a need for long term staff development policies to be adopted, and should the curriculum emphasise the special strengths of staff?

3. Space: is there adequate accommodation? Are specialist rooms available? Is the environment suitable? Is the best use being made of the available accommodation?

For example, the use of school premises inappropriately designed, equipped and furnished for adult learners may itself prevent effective learning from taking place. Yet the movement of furniture and equipment, where possible, can offer improved learning opportunities.

An example from the research of imaginative use of accommodation is that of one FE college which provided a 'drop-in' centre where students with difficulties were able to call during free times in their programmes in order to discuss their problems. The aim was to have no formal programme but to collaborate with students by responding to such questions as "Can I talk about ... How do I express... Can you help me develop my thinking in...". Particular attention was paid to the development of study skills and methods of self-evaluation. This programme was supported by provision of a room with resources - typewriters, micro-computers, books, worksheets, self-evaluation charts. It was constantly available, due to the flexibility of the supervising teacher, who encouraged learners to call even when other groups were using the room. The level of resourcing which the centre required may mean however that similar provision lies beyond the scope of many EA providers.

4. Equipment: how much equipment exists and is it available when required? Is it appropriate for the work to be done? The lack of appropriate equipment can severely curtail provision of EA and/or limit the degree to which a subject can be extended.
5. Time: does time condition some of the objectives? For example, is time available for adequate planning? If not, a re-assessment of how far planning time is considered to be an important factor in curriculum development will need to be made.
6. Finances: is the amount of money available adequate to support all the desired objectives? Despite difficulties of definition considered below 'cost-effectiveness' was an issue of concern for all the EA providers contacted. There was a marked lack of consensus over what actually constituted 'cost effectiveness' and the appropriate strategy to achieve it.

Many emphasised increased effectiveness introduced by internal changes such as encouraging the extending of provision to new learner groups by the wide use of self-programming activities supported periodically by teaching staff.
7. Student attitudes: to what extent do student attitudes act as a stimulus for, or constraint on innovation and progress? How much attention is paid to learners' wishes and learner control? What scope is there for negotiation of the curriculum with learners?

These examples highlight questions concerning ideas governing policy. The research has shown that often practitioners are not fully aware of the ideas about curriculum priorities which exist in their areas or institutions. It seems clear therefore that sometimes there is incompatibility of ideas and hence inefficiency.

Many of the above may seem to be questions for administrators. However, teachers and instructors should also consider these issues. In particular, they have to consider how free they are from the constraints of established ideas and values, what degree of control is exercised by outside agencies such as examining boards or by financial limitations on their own style and degree of expertise. It is clear from the evidence that in planning a course or lesson teachers often attempt to

cover too much in the time available, that is, more than students can reasonably be expected to learn. The type and amount of accommodation and equipment should also be taken into account as, of course, should the attitudes and previous subject knowledge of the students.

D. CONCLUSION

Although each situation may be different, EA providers need to consider the principles, values, concepts and attitudes surrounding the curriculum.

Each provider has to identify realistic as well as desirable aims and objectives, and hence to consider the constraints under which he or she operates.

What seems to be important from the research findings is the need for clarity about the factors which determine policy, and the need for collaboration between providers and learners on a wide scale. Some thought also needs to be given to possible tensions between area, institution and course levels. For example, those working in institutions may be affected in different ways from those determining an area policy. Similarly, a teacher may devise objectives which conflict with those of the institution and/or area. Formally provided means of consultation between all concerned appears to be the most productive way of solving this problem.

In general, collaborative measures, whether internal or external, appear to be beneficial and worth pursuing.

Overall consideration of the issues identified above lead forward to design.

Check List

A. Area level:

Are there fixed or prevailing principles or values which must be considered when identifying aims and objectives?

For example:

- (i) A particular ethos or tradition
- (ii) Established views about the acceptability or otherwise of types of subject matter
- (iii) Established views about the desirability of competition or collaboration with other providers
- (iv) Strong views about teacher and learner autonomy and control.

B. Institutional Level

Are there ideas about priorities to which attention must be given?

For example:

- (i) Priority to minority and special groups, or flexible 'mainstream' provision
- (ii) Response to pressures from particular national initiatives for local groups etc.
- (iii) Influence of special subsidies from external funding agencies
- (iv) Explicit student demand or providers' analysis of student needs

C. Course Level

What practical issues condition policy?

For example:

- (i) Influences of guidelines from external agencies, whether inflexible or open to modification

- (ii) Staffing: number of staff available; specialist strengths; staff development needs
- (iii) Space: adequacy and suitability of accommodation
- (iv) Equipment: Amount and appropriateness
- (v) Time: availability for adequate planning as well as for adequate provision
- (vi) Financer: amount available; effective use
- (vii) Student attitudes and ideas: amount of attention to be paid to learners' wishes and knowledge.

D. Are there areas of conflict over aims and objectives between the various levels of policy determination? How can these be resolved?

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SECTION 2

DESIGN

Introduction

Decisions concerning course or programme design may be taken at various levels and may overlap. For example, there may be centralised planning at an area level, or it may be devolved to institutions or to individual teachers.

In planning the design account must be taken of this factor.

A. AREA LEVEL

Decisions about design at area level must be related to the following questions.

1. How best are the available resources to be allocated?

These include staff and other resources. For example, in the overall programme it is necessary to decide what proportion of resources should be used for teaching, for accommodation, for publicity, for staff development and training activities, for the support of self-programming groups etc.

It may be necessary to decide if some institutions will be supported more than others, and this, for example, may be the result of decisions taken in the Regional Advisory Councils (RACs), and/or the National Advisory Board (NAB).

Some area decisions concerning curriculum design may be concerned with the planning of new opportunities decided at this level, for example, a growing provision of pre-retirement courses.

2. What should be the balance between full-time and part-time staff?
3. What modes of attendance will be offered throughout the area?

Is the stress to be placed on full-time, day-release or part-time evening attendance for example? A current problem concerns the amount of flexi-study to be made available. Should an open-study policy be followed whereby students study through correspondence courses while using the full facilities of a parent institution, including tutorial support?

The Open College Federation of the North West has, for example, successfully offered a broad selection of study routes which enable a wide range of learners to enrol despite quite different motivations. Since its inception in 1975 these alternative routes to HE for mature learners have been based on an identification of the problems which confront adults when returning to study and, subsequently, on appropriate curriculum and guidance practices.

In brief, the gradual transition of adults back into an educational setting has been aided by:

- (i) An admissions counselling service
- (ii) Study skills courses
- (iii) High levels of autonomy for teachers concerned with the introductory parts of the programme.
- (iv) Alternative methods of assessment which avoid formal examinations.

4. If there has been a decision in an area to collaborate with other providers then the question is how best this can be achieved. For example, in the planning undertaken by the RAC's unnecessary duplication by LEA's is eliminated; Joint Committees which exist in many areas between the WEA and the Universities, can fulfil a similar function.

5. How much staff development will be undertaken?

This basically involves the allocation of resources as well as the recognition of staff needs. For example, at area level there may be a decision to second staff regularly to training courses, or there may be regular area training conferences held, or a release of funds for in-house curriculum-led staff development.

3. INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

The main questions at institutional level are:

1. Firstly, how much is the power to make curriculum decisions devolved from area to institutional level, and within institutes to individual members of staff? For example, control over curriculum design may be granted to college principals, academic boards, heads of department or centre heads.
2. Assuming that decisions rest wholly or in part at institutional level the next question, as at area level, is how resources should be allocated, that is how much is to be allocated to teaching, accommodation, publicity, market research, out-reach work, libraries, self-programming groups, staff development etc.
3. Is the design flexible enough?

Examples have emerged in the research enquiry of undue rigidity where originally well-designed curricula have been retained although out-dated for current needs. For example, some organisations have persevered with the same staff development programmes, without any reappraisal, for many years.

Flexibility may sometimes imply a restructuring of groups to ensure a more effective provision. One example of this is where interdepartmental courses have been offered thereby widening the range of expertise available. It may be possible to adjust the timetable to make this expertise more accessible without overloading any one individual. Students are sometimes prevented from attending EA if the learning opportunities are not available at appropriate times. For example, single-parents may be constrained by their children's school time-table commitments.

An example of a break from a hitherto rigid and repetitive programme resulted from an examination by the staff of the service provided in one AE institution. Some of the changes achieved were:-

- (1) the matching of the length of each course to its objectives rather than rigidly standardising them. (During 1982-83 courses could be found of only two weeks duration whereas others lasted 4, 6, 8, 12, 20, 32 and 36 weeks.) This flexibility meant that more courses could be offered and resources released for other initiatives.
- (11) a high priority to provision for the disadvantaged.
- (111) improvements to the balance of the 'mainstream' programme, for example by increasing the number of mathematics and science related courses.

This exploration of flexible alternative programmes resulted in a better use of resources and a better focus on educational achievement.

- 4. How can an adequate degree of control over the design of the curriculum be maintained?

The results of the research have suggested that providers with the most effective control over curriculum content were those who encouraged participation from managers and teaching staff, learners and elected members.

A related question concerns the role of management committees, academic boards and similar bodies. Is it possible to devise more effective ways of securing their support? The research has shown that the degree of success of these bodies varies enormously from organisation to organisation. Some appear to meet very infrequently and have little influence, whereas others provide a degree of support.

C. COURSE LEVEL

Good practice requires coherent and well-informed course or programme design. Attention must be paid to aims and objectives, content, methods,

aids and assessment. The research has shown that the effective handling of these basic elements is often assisted by genuine rather than token participation between planners, teachers and students, whether at area, institution or course level. An example which extends this is identified below.

At the end of a seven week course in dress and soft furnishing the learners were encouraged to join a self-programming group. This offered an environment providing mutual support, encouragement and skill-sharing without a teacher being present. The teacher moved into a consultancy role and provided her expertise when the group were unable to solve problems from their collective experience and knowledge.

In this example a continuing dependency on the teacher gave way to self-directed learning, whilst educational continuity was maintained through the advisory nature of the teachers role. This approach also enabled the teacher to act as a resource for several groups where previously only one group could have been serviced in the time available.

In considering course or programme design attention must be paid to the following questions.

1. In terms of aims and objectives what is being attempted?

For example, is the teacher wishing to convey knowledge, build confidence, develop skills, stimulate motivation or secure understanding? Should the teacher be attempting to develop learner independence?

2. With regard to subject content, is too much being attempted in the time available?

A variety of reasons may exist for over-provision of content. For example, an inexperienced teacher may use content as a means of retaining status as the subject authority. Alternatively, a teacher of an examination based subject may offer too much content in the hope of containing his or her students' failure rate.

3. Have all the possibilities of different teaching and learning methods been explored?

Having identified aims and objectives, the matching of content and method is important, and it is usually inappropriate to rely on a single method such as a lecture, or a student-led seminar for the delivery of all content. There are no 'correct' choices of method for all occasions. Choice depends on the type of student, the environment and teacher styles as well as upon aims, objectives and content, yet many teachers and students become accustomed to the use of only a small number of teaching and learning methods. Some examples of the range available are:

Computer Assisted Learning	Lectures
Case Studies	One-to-one teaching
Demonstrations	Project Work
Discussions	Role Play
Experiments	Seminars
Individual Study	Simulations
Investigations	Tutorials

The amount of student activity requires much consideration. An example of suitably related course content and methods concerned students in an extra-mural department who received lectures in concepts concerning conservation and used practical skills provided through a workshop, thereby developing their own experience in an investigation. They also ran a field exhibition and a collaborative research paper for publication. The relationship between method and content enabled an extensive learning experience to take place.

4. Is adequate use being made of teaching/learning aids?

Some examples of resources are:

Books and other printed material	Cassette recorders
Films and Slides	Overhead projectors
Individual experience	Film Projectors
Radio and Television programmes	Tape recorders
Micro-computers	Video recorders

5. Are staff selecting aids and methods which achieve satisfactory results overall?

This question leads to the very important matter of staff development and training, and those responsible for curriculum development must consider whether an acceptable level of provision exists or should exist. It should be emphasised that staff development and training is as important for planners, at whatever level, as for teachers.

6. What assessment procedures have been devised?

What procedures have been adopted to assess the amount, degree and effectiveness of learning? Is assessment designed to meet external requirements or is it offered to facilitate individual development? To what extent are self or peer assessment procedures offered?

Conclusion

It will be clear from the above that there are some elements common to all levels, such as the use of resources, and that careful planning is likely to ensure effective outcomes. At the same time the design should lead forward to questions about implementation (as in Section 3), and be flexible enough to allow for modifications while the plan is in progress. It must, of course, also lead to questions of assessment (as in Section 4). Good practice requires well informed overall planning, which is most effectively assisted by genuine participation between planners, teachers and learners. This in turn may lead on to more self-directed learning where the educator acts as a specialist resource person rather than as 'teacher'.

Check List

A. Area level

1. How best are the available resources to be allocated throughout the area?
 - staff
 - material resources
2. What should be the balance between full-time and part-time staff?
3. What modes of attendance will be offered throughout the area? eg. full-time, day-release, part-time, evening, flexi-study.
4. How can collaboration with other providers be best achieved?
5. How much staff development should be undertaken?

B. Institutional level

1. How much power to make curriculum decisions is devolved from area to institutional level, and, within institutes, to individual members of staff?
2. How should resources be allocated within the institutions?
3. Is the design flexible enough?
4. How can an adequate degree of control over the design of the curriculum be maintained?

C. Course Level

1. What are the aims and objectives which are being attempted?
2. With regard to subject content, is too much being attempted in the time available?
3. Have all the possibilities of different teaching and learning methods been explored?
4. Is adequate use being made of teaching and learning aids?
5. Are the combined aids and methods helping to achieve satisfactory results?
6. Is the amount and quality of staff development and training adequate?
7. What procedures have been devised to assess the amount, degree and effectiveness of learning?

In general it should be noted that assessment at all levels is important as a way of ensuring that appropriate adjustments are made as the course or programme proceeds, and not only on its completion.

SECTION 3

IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

One of the main problems is that of relating the actual practice to the planning which has taken place. Even when the design has been carefully constructed (as suggested in Section 2) there is evidence that not infrequently a failure to secure good implementation occurs because practitioners are not fully aware of the problems, or because they interpret the design in ways which were not intended, or because they are unwilling to give the design their full support.

The problem of ensuring continuity between aims, objectives and practice appears to be particularly acute when there is a negotiated curriculum.

The major questions to be considered are therefore:

A. AREA LEVEL

1. Has there been adequate planning of how to secure implementation by those directly concerned?

(i) Is there good communication between those with area responsibilities and those in institutions so that, for example, there is a clear understanding of the amount of autonomy allowed to college principals or centre heads. This is essentially a matter of organisational procedure and where there is a belief that all decisions are taken at area level with little if any consultation, those at local level appear to give the plans only minimum support. The evidence suggests that good practice required maximum consultation between all levels.

(ii) The research evidence indicates that although Local Development Councils (LDCs) and similar bodies have failed generally to produce effective innovation at field level, they have worked very well as organs of communication. Through the exchange of information which takes place in them, EA providers have been able to gain a greater understanding of other organisations and

their programmes, expertise and networks. LDCs have also provided opportunities for the recognition of mutual interest and for closer relationships between, for example, traditional providers and other organisations with more recently acquired roles.

- (iii) Area organisations can also help implementation by ensuring that the broad overall forms of publicity are adequate while also taking care that there is compatibility between these and more local advertising. For example, a county produced general advertising to which the publicity of each local college or centre could be attached. Similarly, some WEA districts have devised district posters into which branch notices can be inserted.
- (iv) Decisions about fee structures must be clearly communicated and local needs expressly taken into account. Examples of a failure to do this concern some adult education centres where there was uncertainty as to the amount of variation in fees which was permitted and hence some confusing discrepancies between neighbouring institutions.
- (v) Areas can also assist implementation by ensuring a satisfactory provision of opportunities to 'train the trainers' who will then assist staff development at local level. These opportunities should be staffed by experienced EA personnel across section and subject boundaries. At present there seem to be few examples of this and those which do exist seem mainly confined to provision by some RAC's, and, exceptionally, by the DES.
- (vi) Similarly, the organisation of satisfactory guidance services by area authorities assists the carrying out of good practice.

A case study which illustrates some of these points is offered below:

In 1978, a group of literacy and community workers and educationalists formed a working-party in order to satisfy the

need they had identified for an educational guidance service in an inner city area.

The aim of the service was "to make educational and training opportunities for adults accessible and relevant" by:

- (a) providing 'comprehensive and accurate information' on educational and training opportunities
- (b) identifying the aims of individual learners and matching these to available provision
- (c) helping learners 'to articulate their aspirations' through advice
- (d) systematically identifying the educational and vocational needs of adults in the locality
- (e) offering outreach programmes in order to improve both awareness of, and access to, the education service, and to encourage participation of occasional or non-users
- (f) systematically providing the service with information on unmet and changing needs of adults
- (g) advocating additional provision and greater flexibility to meet appropriate needs.

The educational guidance service liaised closely with other similar bodies falling under its aegis in order to identify common problems and pool information where possible.

The staff of the service (one full-time, two part-time) emphasised the importance of the following aspects of their operations through:

- (h) occupying suitable premises; after the move from a 'back-street' office in the local Citizen's Advice Bureau to a shop-based operation the number of enquiries rose by 300% to 1500 per year.

- (i) establishing and continuing close liaison with a wide range of local agencies and community groups in order to disseminate information, assess needs and build up a comprehensive information bank
- (j) establishing and maintaining effective feedback to educational providers
- (k) attempting to contact and stimulate enrolment among occasional or non-users of education or training provision

By establishing a recording system for the demand and use of the service, it was possible for staff to build up a comprehensive profile of users. This enabled the service to produce informed strategic planning. It was considered appropriate to identify trends in demand in order to construct detailed plans for improving and expanding operations when presenting reports to the funding agency.

Staff were anxious to identify needs which they could not currently satisfy, and to anticipate increasing demand which would put them under pressure. The following problems and limitations produced by under-resourcing were outlined:

- (l) the service was unable to act as advocate on behalf of groups and individuals
- (m) more detailed examination of users' needs for feedback to educational providers was necessary
- (n) the need for wide-ranging and systematic outreach work was present
- (o) the need to construct a network of educational guidance services for the pooling of information on priorities, problems and opportunities, each with a focus on serving local community needs, was identified.

2. Has indirect support for the programme been adequately provided?

The evidence suggests that when programmes have been broadly decided at area level, it is valuable to plan for efficient and continuing communication through which policy makers, administrators and elected members can be kept informed about the implementation of curriculum decisions. Satisfactory implementation depends not only upon the expeditious transmission of decisions to the practitioners but also on the continued interest and support of those more indirectly concerned.

The following case study demonstrates a concern for communication and participation:

In one LEA area, after local government re-organisation and subsequent changes in the AE service, a new principal was appointed. He had overall responsibility for four operational areas, each of which had its own full-time area head and administrative officer with a considerable degree of autonomy. Prior to re-organisation the provision was mainly a general non-vocational kind, with most classes being of a standard 30 week type, and with no attempt at modification or evaluation being made. The principal, after informal discussions with colleagues, took the initiative and drew up the following list of aims:

- (i) to provide basic education for adults
- (ii) to help disadvantaged and handicapped adults to gain more benefit from AE, and to become more integrated in the wider community
- (iii) to produce a range of educational and cultural activities for adults
- (iv) to provide facilities and support for self-programming adult groups pursuing specific subject interests but without the continuing support of a professional teacher
- (v) to enable adults to have easy access to information and

guidance about AE, and particularly about basic education.

Effective implementation relies on the support of staff responsible for the provision at all levels, and the principal therefore involved all senior full-time staff and asked that they adapt it to their own particular location, selecting the key objectives and identifying the main development areas. This led them all to consider the overall direction, and ensured that mere contraction and expansion of provision was avoided. The commitment of the full-time staff was achieved by involving them in a consultative process which drew upon their information and ideas, and by the open nature of the decision-making process. This, in fact, also performed a useful staff development function. Among the wide range of people he consulted, the principal included elected members, feeling that it was very important for them to have a continuing opportunity to examine particular aspects of the work in detail. This proved to be successful: they could recognise the rationale for each part of the programme, see the progress being made, and from an informed position give their support.

B. INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

Similar questions apply at institutional level.

1. Have ways been devised to secure adequate support for the design at institutional level? The research has indicated the value of:
 - (1) a clear and effective communication channel between the institution and the policy makers at area level, and, with this, attention to the establishment of satisfactory relationships.
 - (11) action to ensure support from locally elected members, employers, welfare agencies etc. Essentially this means ensuring that they are kept informed of developments, but they may also be involved in the working out of the programme.

- (iii) more effective communication between the curriculum developer and management committees or academic boards in order to achieve better understanding. The evidence suggests that these bodies are of greater assistance when they have a more open structure.
- (iv) good staff support, gained partly by good relationships and partly by satisfactory organisation.

Where there is open discussion and negotiation with heads of department and with teachers it often seems that the internal strength of an institution improves. Staff respond more whole-heartedly when they have a clearer understanding of the constraints on a programme and of the opportunities it can offer. Lack of awareness can result in missed opportunities to make valuable proposals or modifications to programmes. In some institutions a degree of inertia seems to exist. There may also be resistance on the grounds that the design makes unreasonable demands on staff time.

Staff support appears to be influenced particularly by the effectiveness of open decision making procedures.

- (v) expanded opportunities for staff development at institutional levels. One instance which highlighted this need came from an AE college:

The local authority undertook a major review of strategic policy and as a result approached the college asking them "to identify educational priorities and we'll look at the money you need". It was not merely a course-based review, nor an assurance of continued support of existing courses. Rather, it was a review of demand, provision and practice which considered aims and objectives of the service. For example, major changes were made in publicity, and curriculum practices. The college accorded with the spirit of the new policy, and several new projects were undertaken. One of these was a course intended to provide

several hundred industrial workers who were to be made redundant with the opportunity to sample various activities the college was able to offer. The initiative was unsuccessful, and a major contributory factor was the lack of attention paid to staff development and training. The staff were unable to relate to people not taking specific courses, and there was a lack of counselling support to aid them with their new task and role. The initiative consequently faltered, not because the college and its staff were unwilling to adapt or innovate, but because there had been a failure to assess resources and expertise and to undertake necessary staff preparation and support. Without a structure to provide such support which would have enabled them to acquire the appropriate skills, the staff "fell back on their old (academic) habits".

2. What help can be given to those responsible for managing the implementation of the design in order to achieve maximum effectiveness?

The evidence suggests that there ought to be opportunities for staff development and training for those who serve on management committees or have executive responsibilities. Such individuals play an important part in the implementation of curriculum development decisions and yet often those with responsibilities other than as teachers are omitted from schemes of preparation and support. Steps ought also to be taken to improve the effectiveness of guidance and counselling within an institution.

3. Is the publicity and market² adequate? How much publicity is required and for what purpose?

- (1) Some programmes within the curriculum may need little publicity or marketing because they are determined by the requirements of an external agency such as the MSC, which provides the student body. Other programmes thought to be desirable and possible may require considerable effort to secure recruitment, and it is important to identify with precision and clarity what the target groups are.

(11) Other decisions are required which concern:

- (a) the amount of general publicity material available and the purpose it is intended to serve.
- (b) the amount of specialised publicity available.
- (c) publicity and other marketing methods which may be adopted given adequate human and physical resources. These may include:

Advertisements (libraries, shopping
precincts, clubs)

Brochures

Handbills and leaflets

Newspapers

Outreach publicity by individuals

Journals

Public meetings

Radio and TV

- (d) how the effectiveness of publicity and marketing can be estimated.
- (e) use of staff expertise in publicising programmes and in marketing them and the institution.

Both general information material and publicity designed for specific target groups need to be considered.

C. COURSE LEVEL

1. Implementation at course level clearly requires the teacher to have competent subject skills which, it is assumed, have been verified by the employing agency. Equally, effective teaching skills are required. The research suggests that attention should be paid to:

(1) Styles and approach

There are no 'ideal' teaching styles, but it is important to achieve some compatibility between teacher and student. Two contrasting examples are:

- (a) a learning group wishing to participate in its own learning but restrained by a didactic style of teaching
- (b) a teacher with a permissive, student-centred style faced with a submissive group of learners who require to be 'taught'.

As relationships develop there should be modification in order to incorporate the wishes of both teacher and student. The evidence suggests that a flexible teaching approach is a major asset, and more easily enables student attitudes to be kept in view.

(11) Methods

The methods used in any educational activity with adults must be suitable to the subject as well as to the students in order to secure maximum learning. Examples have been found of teachers using a restricted number of methods and being unwilling to experiment owing to a number of factors such as lack of appropriate expertise and fear of failure. In a mixed group it is not always practicable to serve the needs of all students at all times. Yet every educational activity should, at some point, provide individual satisfaction. Some strategies found to be helpful are:

- (a) the use of instruction sheets or work cards for students to use at their own pace
- (b) a careful balance of individual and group work as opposed to 'whole group' teaching only, or the 'circular tour' method used exclusively to assist students one by one.

(c) as indicated above, a common fault is for the teacher to attempt too much in the time available, and the research has revealed examples of over-loaded syllabi. The pacing of a subject should take account of the time adults need to learn new skills etc. The pace at which these skills are offered should also recognise the students' existing experience, expertise and attitudes.

(d) Environment

Attention should be given to lay-out. It has been found that learning can be assisted if adults are in face-to-face situations. Thus, in informal circumstances the placing of furniture in a circular or horse-shoe pattern can aid active inter-change between learners.

2. The research has indicated a need for the provision of adequate facilities for staff development. This suggests:

- (i) opportunities for the re-assessment of current practices and for the development of additional expertise and confidence. Exposure to and active engagement with, a wide variety of learning and teaching methods also seems particularly valuable. On the whole experiential rather than didactic methods appear to bring longer term benefits, although trainers should recognise the danger of overstressing any one mode.
- (ii) an opportunity to modify attitudes to the work and with this an encouragement to take initiatives.

If the programme is to be satisfactorily implemented teachers need to know what is required and to give it their full support. Any change in methodology or general approaches which are planned should be fully discussed with teachers. Otherwise there is a likelihood that they will adhere to past practices.

3. Attention should be given to the support needed from non-teaching staff such as clerical and technical workers, for whom a special programme of staff development may be very helpful.

Examples of failure of support have included the non-arrival of audio-visual equipment when required, lack of help in operating equipment, refusals to undertake duplication or photocopying for part-time teachers etc.

4. A check should be made on the adequacy of general resources, including equipment, the provision of a crèche etc.

CONCLUSION

If design is to be satisfactorily implemented attention must be paid at all levels to ensure that practitioners are fully aware of curriculum plans and proposed developments. It is crucial that the understanding of all staff is secured so that the design is fully supported. The research suggests that adequate staff development is the most important factor.

During the period of implementation it is necessary to evaluate progress and to examine matters such as:

- the effectiveness of the structure of the design
- the ways in which resources are being used
- the effectiveness of publicity and marketing

These are the concerns of the next section.

Check List

A. Area Level

1. Has there been adequate planning of how to secure full implementation by those directly concerned? For instance:
 - (i) is there good communication to ensure understanding and knowledge of the design?
 - (ii) have arrangements been made for the exchange of information in LDC's or similar organisations?
 - (iii) are the overall publicity and marketing methods adequate?
 - (iv) has attention been given to clarifying knowledge about fee structures?
2. Has indirect support for the programmes been adequately provided? Are there satisfactory means of ensuring a good flow of information about developments to administrators, elected members employers etc?

B. Institutional Level

1. Have ways been devised of securing maximum support for the implementation? For instance:
 - (i) is there an effective communication channel between the institution and policy makers at area level?
 - (ii) are the means of informing and/or possibly involving locally elected members, employers, welfare agencies etc. adequate?
 - (iii) is there effective communication with the management committee or academic board and are they satisfactorily organised to provide support?
 - (iv) have steps been taken to ensure good staff support? Is the flow of information satisfactory? Does the design make unreasonable demands on staff time?
 - (v) is more staff development and training at institutional level required to ensure effective implementation?

2. In what ways can more effective support by those responsible for management be developed? Do they require special staff development programmes?
3. Is the publicity/marketing adequate?

C. Course Level

1. Do the styles and approaches of the teacher match the attitudes and needs of the students? Are they flexible enough?
2. Are the methods suitable to ensure maximum learning? For instance:
 - (i) are they compatible with the subject as well as with the students?
 - (ii) is the range of methods used adequate?
 - (iii) is enough student activity available?
 - (iv) is enough allowance being made for individual differences?
 - (v) are attempts being made to deal with problems encountered by mixed groups?
 - (vi) is the pacing of the subject matter appropriate?
3. Has attention been paid to the appropriateness of the environment? Has the physical lay-out of the teaching location been considered?
4. Are additional facilities for staff development and training required in order to give opportunities for eg.
 - (i) the development of additional expertise
 - (ii) modification of attitudes and approaches
 - (iii) re-assessment of current practices?
5. Is the support from non-teaching staff adequate? Do they require special training and staff development opportunities?
6. Are the general resources adequate?

SECTION 4

EVALUATION

Introduction

In a formal sense evaluation is seldom carried out adequately because of difficulties over resources, time and appropriate expertise. For good practice, however, evaluation is of central importance and what follows is a series of suggestions as to how it can be more effectively developed. The main questions - obviously related to the issues raised in Section 3 - are:

A. AREA LEVEL

1. Was the overall size of the programme adequate to match the needs as planned?

Often it seems that the planned aims and objectives outstrip the size of the programme and may therefore have to be re-appraised. Alternatively, it may be possible to plan increases in activity to remedy the deficiencies which have been revealed.

2. Were all the available resources throughout the area fully used?

These resources may be human in terms of all types of staff, or material in the form of buildings, equipment, etc. They may include guidance and advisory services if any exist.

3. Was the planned structure of provision in the area adequate?

Were any parts unsatisfactory? Can the weaknesses be remedied? Did the employers and/or student groups give it support?

There are a multitude of variables which condition the outcome of a design and it is unlikely, therefore that any structure will be completely successful. An analysis of the design, however, should reveal weaknesses which can be remedied. For example, the distribution of course provision in the various institutions of the area may be found not to match the response from students.

4. Was the design 'cost-effective'?

This is a possible question which, as the evidence indicates, is beset with problems. It is difficult, for example, to define exactly the term 'effective' or to measure educational outcomes with a precise degree of accuracy, especially as they may be long term rather than short term. Financial costs can be either exaggerated or underestimated and it is usually difficult in the educational budget to apportion administrative costs, maintenance costs and general overheads. Simple calculation about the number of students per teacher, or examination results do not alone provide satisfactory measures of cost-effectiveness.

The evidence therefore suggests that although this question may be tackled, any answers should be treated with extreme caution. The collection of information about costs and budgeting may be helpful, however, in examining the effectiveness of the structure of the provision.

5. Are the methods of evaluation at area level satisfactory?

Evaluation at area level sometimes takes the form of an annual review carried out by senior staff or sometimes by special 'inspectors'. Regular conferences involving staff drawn from within an area appear to be particularly useful.

B. INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

1. Some of the questions to be posed in evaluating the implementation of the design at institutional level are:

- (i) were all the resources in the institution fully used?
Examples have been brought to light of unequal loading of members of staff, some being asked to make only a very light contribution while others were heavily overburdened. There were also instances in which expensive equipment had lain idle for long periods although it could have been used to good effect.

- (ii) was the time-table planned satisfactorily? Did students find it possible to attend all the courses they wished?
- (iii) how far was it possible to adhere to the original plan for the programme? Were modifications beneficial or otherwise?
- (iv) did the management committee or academic board or the elected members play a satisfactory role. Were the channels of communication effective? What obstacles existed? can these be remedied?
- (v) did the staff, teaching, administrative or technical, co-operate fully in helping to achieve the planned aims and objectives? Was there evidence of misunderstanding and/or resistance? Was the amount and type of staff development and training satisfactory?
- (vi) how effective was the publicity/marketing?

2. How should the evaluation be carried out?

- (i) The evidence in this enquiry strongly underlined the need for adequate records to be kept as a first stage towards efficient evaluation. As has been said, 'good hunches come from good data'. Some providers, however, appear not to recognise the need for formal information-collecting systems because of the small size of their organisations. It seems clear that even in these cases records could be valuable both as aide memoires and as the basis for long term planning. A first evaluation question must therefore be: have adequate records been kept? Practitioners, however, also need to ask what 'adequate' should mean in terms of their own institution. There may be differences because of local circumstances and there is no point in collecting information just for its own sake without its being put to use.

Data collection can to a large extent be carried out through an enrolment card system which records the personal details of a learner (sex, age, occupation, etc are possible items) and is filed to indicate course and subject enrolment. If resources permit, it may be possible to store this information on a micro-computer, which allows for rapid and up to date analysis.

Besides details about students and enrolment, some institutions have found it useful to obtain:

- (a) evidence about the effects of various types of publicity
- (b) details of enquiries received, eg. personal callers, telephone enquiries, enquiries by letter etc.
- (c) information about fee income and student views on fees
- (d) information about student assessment.

As many adults may be understandably suspicious about the collection of personal information, it is important to make the purposes of the exercise clear to all students and to attempt in this way to secure maximum consultation. A demand for a large amount of data at any one time may create resentment and lack of response. Care should be taken to ensure that both the amount and the methods used are clearly related to the aims of the evaluation.

Some of the most successful instances of evaluation found in the research were those in which the process was not seen as an unusual activity but as an accepted part of the regular routine of the providing agency. In one example, telephone receptionists automatically filled in record cards detailing enquiries about courses, and students automatically filled in report cards on difficulties experienced in locating course books. It was asserted that this type of information made clear previously hidden characteristics and trends, and that this made it easier to design good programmes.

- (ii) Within the institution, as at area level, evaluation may be carried out by annual review, or by various types of periodic analysis. Sometimes there can be assessment after each course.

The evidence suggests that the most satisfactory results are achieved through consultation and maximum participation by all members of staff.

C. COURSE LEVEL

At course level there are two separate issues:

- (i) evaluation by the teacher of the achievements in his or her own courses, programmes etc.
- (ii) evaluation by others of the quality and competence of the teacher.

1. Teachers evaluating their own courses need to ask:

- (i) Were the planned aims and objectives successfully achieved, and if so, to what degree?
Were the original aims in any way unrealistic?
- (ii) How much deflection from the original course plan took place?
If there were changes, were they necessary and why?
- (iii) Were the methods used effective in helping the students to learn? Might a greater use of equipment or other aids have produced improvements?
- (iv) How much did the students learn?
Did the course or programme achieve the results thought desirable by the students as well as by the teacher?

2. There are several factors to consider when evaluating teacher competence:

- (i) Drop out rates or examination results are two types of performance indicators, but must be treated with care. In themselves they are not necessarily a good guide to the competence of a teacher as many factors are involved.
- (ii) Similarly the popularity of a teacher is not a guarantee of quality.
- (iii) Evaluation of staff performances should be undertaken as a long term measure in which profiles are developed over a period of time. It may be aided by student check lists or student feed back in some other form.
- (iv) The scrutiny of the performances of individual teachers is difficult because it involves subjective judgements and it must therefore have a broad base and be sensitively handled. The process of self evaluation offers an important additional dimension, not least because it passes some part of the responsibility for assessment to the individual concerned.

EXAMPLES

It is perhaps indicative of the general situation that the research enquiry produced no examples of thorough evaluation at any level.

On the whole, subjective monitoring by staff seemed to be the maximum undertaken and the amount of this was very variable. In some parts of the field, however, the following examples were found:

- (i) a regular review of programmes and their development in meetings of area principals, or of staff within colleges or of full-time staff in extra-mural departments or in WEA districts.
- (ii) more formal requests to teachers to complete a form at the end of each course. In this they were asked to indicate

their impressions of the achievements of the course, and details of work undertaken by students, as well as comments on the accommodation and equipment available. The aim was to illuminate the general situation and the process seems to have been carried out most by university extra-mural departments.

- (iii) the circulation of questionnaires to students asking for their opinions about the provision.
- (iv) Unsolicited student feedback. For example, a WEA class had been introduced to an accepted range of experiential teaching methods by their tutor to assist in an understanding of the subject. Another tutor was engaged to teach a specific topic within the course and relied exclusively on presentation of slides followed by short discussion periods. The class secretary was asked by the other students to contact the providing agency to observe that they did not wish to learn in this comparatively passive way and to request that they have a tutor who would allow them to learn actively through experience.

Check List

A. Area Level

1. Was the overall size of the programme adequate to match the needs of the area?
2. Were all the available resources (human and material) in the area fully used?
3. Was the structure of the provision adequate?
4. Did all groups give it support?
5. Was the provision/design 'cost-effective'?

B. Institutional Level

1. Were all the available resources in the institution fully used?
2. Was the planned timetable satisfactory?
3. How far was it possible to adhere to the original plans for the programme?
Were the changes justifiable?
4. Was there a lack of support by management committees and similar bodies?
Were there any failures in communication?
5. Did all staff co-operate?
Was there any misunderstanding and/or resistance? Was the amount and type of staff development satisfactory?
6. Was the evaluation carried out in a satisfactory way?
Were enough records kept?
Were students involved in the evaluation?
Were there periodic reviews and if so were they satisfactory?
How much did members of staff participate?

C. Course Level

1. Evaluation by a teacher:

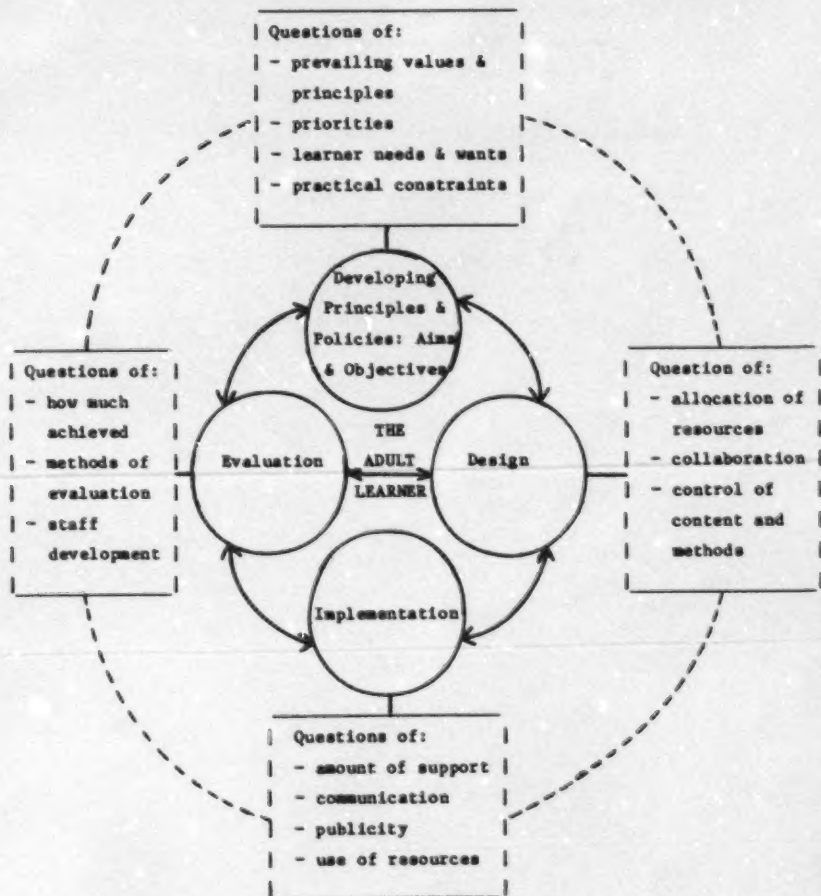
- (i) were the aims and objectives achieved?
- (ii) was there deflection from the original course plan?
was this helpful?
- (iii) were the methods helpful in assisting students to learn?
- (iv) how much did the students learn?
- (v) how was this information gained? could the evaluation
process be improved?

2. Evaluation of teaching competence

- (i) is a long-term profile developing?
- (ii) how much use is being made of self-evaluation?
- (iii) is good use being made of student feed-back?
- (iv) has enough thought been given to the evaluation of
competence and the use made of it (eg. feedback to
teachers)?

A 'SYSTEMS' MODEL

This systems model is derived from the four major elements of curriculum illuminated through case studies and described above. It represents the systematic inter-relationship which exists between these elements and identifies, in each quarter, certain basic questions relating to them.



PERSPECTIVES OF GOOD PRACTICE

The Research Findings

The concept of EA, while theoretically acceptable, becomes less coherent when sought in practice.

It was considered necessary, in implementing the research, to identify among various EA sources different and often competing sets of criteria for specifying 'good practice'. In particular it was important to differentiate between what the provider considered as being 'good practice' in the circumstances and 'good practice' as an ideal to which the provider aspired despite the circumstances.

In the course of the investigative phase of the research a noticeable trend, or tendency, emerged regarding the degree of consensus among providers as to what constituted 'good practice' in EA.

General descriptions of 'good practice' were accompanied by a high degree of agreement among providers and within providing organisations, while more specific descriptions of 'good practice' resulted in a low degree of consensus. For example:

General description

'Provision of EA should be cost-effective.

Specific descriptions:

'No courses should be subsidised'.
'Subsidy is a cost-effective way of servicing special groups'.
'Self-programming groups using the teacher as a resource are cost-effective'.
'Self-programming groups do not encourage effectively directed learning'.
'Competition between providers encourages efficiency'.
'Competition encourages inefficient duplication of provision and effort between providers'.

Thus descriptions of specific practices are most numerous, and providers are in greater disagreement, when it comes to actual strategies and tactics used to implement general principles.

The simple 'good practice' listing below, which is not exhaustive, moves therefore, from 'general principles' to 'specific strategies' and 'tactical measures'. It must be emphasised that the two latter groups represent a response to the specific constraints which each provider experiences to a greater or lesser extent. Examples given in an accompanying research document^a offer the degree of detail necessary for 'contextualising' specific strategies and tactics employed by providers.

The lists are not placed in any order of priority but serve as significant exemplars for consideration in EA curriculum development.

1. General Principles

- Maintenance of adequate degree of control over curriculum content.
- Maintenance of adequate monitoring and evaluation procedures for both the provider and the learner.
- Maintenance of adequate communication structures.
- Maximisation of inter-agency liaison.
- Identification of individual, group and community needs.
- Maintenance and expansion of staff development and training opportunities.
- Establishment of 'Training the Trainers' programmes.
- Awareness of and response to changing employment patterns.
- Matching of provision to needs - through negotiation of content, process and evaluation procedures, for example.
- Maximisation of learning opportunities through the offer of interactive and experiential processes.
- Maintenance of 'cost-effective' provision.

^a Curriculum development in the education of adults: research document (FEU, 1984) available on request from FEU.

2. Strategies

- Maintenance of 'open'/consultative management structures.
- Maintenance of 'open'/consultative policy development.
- Maintenance of responsive rather than autocratic policy development.
- Recognition of the complexity of the notion of 'curriculum balance'
- Liaison with non-educational agencies for purpose of needs assessment.
- Identification of criteria for provision for priority groups.
- Identification of better access, guidance, advice and counselling services.
- Maintenance of appropriate forms of support services to maximise enrolment from special groups.
- Maintenance and development of credit transfer policies.
- Maximising of financial input from grant monies.
- Creation of demand via needs assessment.
- Encouragement of self-directed learning.
- Provision of adequate student support at professional and personal levels.

3. Tactical measures

- Development of 'active' academic boards committed to a 'co-operative' model.

- Construction and negotiation of individual study plans.
- Routine collection of data, eg. student enrolment and 'drop-out' figures for monitoring purposes.
- Support of self-programming groups.
- Optimum use of 'progressive' methods, ie. those which actively engage adults in their own learning.
- Encouragement of financial concessions, eg. fees and travel costs for the unemployed, or those in rural areas lacking adequate transport facilities.
- Maximisation of teacher awareness of programme design skills, eg. the creation of independent learning opportunities with and/or for students.
- Maximisation of teacher awareness of students' existing experience and/or expertise as a factor in curriculum development.
- Retention of close and active liaison with professional and voluntary organisations.
- Promotion of local inter-agency working groups for specific purposes.
- Use of LDC's for communication purposes.
- Formalisation of student representation on policy/management committees.
- Monitoring of demand for information and publicity.
- 'Follow-up' procedures on students' programme completion.
- Inter-provider negotiation for provision of credit transfer and 'special entry' systems.

MATTERS OF CONCERN

Finally two key concerns must be identified. They have been drawn from contemporary literature and current practice as witnessed during the research.

1. Firstly, it may be necessary to develop more systematic planning in EA provision so as to avoid unrelated and harmfully competitive programmes. For example, the research has identified some wastage of opportunity and duplication of resources due to lack of co-ordinated provision by EA organisations. Conversely, well organised and collaborative planning could benefit providers both separately and collectively. A systematic approach to EA, in retaining the autonomy of providers, should assist in the presentation of broader and more varied learning opportunities for the participant than purely competitive provision can offer.
2. Secondly, there is a need to establish and develop adequate communication networks so as to facilitate regular contact between providers, and to ease the dissemination of information. The establishment of such networks creates the best possible circumstances for producing innovation. A structure which ensures efficient diffusion of information and policy can also provide a means of introducing local 'good practice' into policy processes. It will be important for providers at a local level to inform others of their activities, for bodies such as NIACE and the FEU to augment communication from national level to the field, and for some form of liaison across various levels of provision to be established.

A strategy for identifying and exploiting networks for routine communication is necessary, with individuals being elected to 'intermediary' roles in order to consider and implement appropriate formal approaches. Conferences held by organisations such as NIACE, the FEU, the ECA and UCACE should complement and/or stimulate regional initiatives taken by bodies such as the RAC's and associations such as EMRLAE, SERFACE and the Standing Conferences on Adult Education in the North of England.

GLOSSARY

Aims

General intentions which indicate long term directions for an education activity.

Curriculum

Taken to mean the whole teaching-learning activity which relates policy decisions to practice.

Demand

This normally concerns the degree of support by adults for an educational activity.

Evaluation

The assessment of the worth of a teaching-learning experience. Evaluation judges how effectively the aims, objectives and learning processes are being achieved. It should be a jointly shared exercise between those directly involved and the results taken account of for subsequent consideration and use.

Methods

These concern the tactics of teaching and can be considered within three modes:

Search

Interaction

Presentation

A number of methods such as discussion will span modes. Unlike objectives they represent means rather than ends.

Needs and Wants

In general, needs and wants are concerned with learners' requirements, whether implicit (needs) or explicit (wants). Providers must consider their curriculum development, therefore, in terms of what students, or potential students, may be seeking.

Objectives

Objectives place a sharper and more specific focus on aims. The identification of objectives assist those involved in an educational activity to recognise and achieve their goals. They may broadly concern physical skills, intellectual skills or relate to feelings and emotions.

Programme

This term is often used interchangeably with 'course'. However, a course normally offers a continuing series of educational activities whereas a programme may be held on single occasions only, or contain a number of courses within it.

ABBREVIATIONS

AE	Adult Education
BTEC	Business and Technician Education Council
CNAA	Council for National Academic Awards
DES	Department of Education and Science
EA	Education of Adults
ECA	Educational Centres Association
ECCTIS	Educational Counselling and Credit Transfer Information Service
EEC	European Economic Commission
EMRIAE	East Midlands Regional Institute of Adult Education
ESF	European Social Fund
FE	Further Education
FEU	Further Education Unit
GCE	General Certificate of Education
HE	Higher Education
LEA	Local Education Authority
LDC	Local Development Council
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NAB	National Advisory Board

NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
OU	Open University
PICKUP	Professional, Industrial and Commercial Up-dating
RAC	Regional Advisory Council
RCS	Regional Curriculum Base
SERFACE	South East Regional Forum for Adult and Continuing Education
UCACE	Universities Council for Adult and Continuing Education
WEA	Workers' Educational Association
YTS	Youth Training Scheme

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